



## Ouimet Canyon Provincial Park

## Parc provincial Ouimet Canyon

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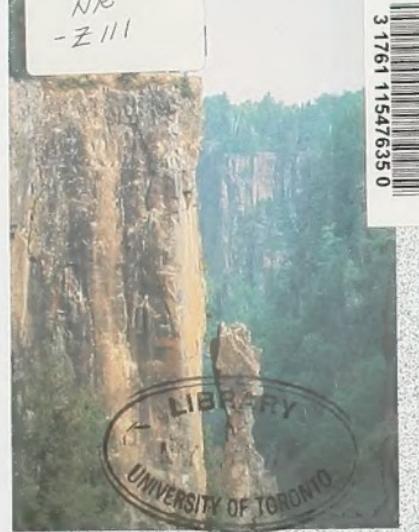
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### A View You Will Never Forget

Ouimet Canyon, a spectacular 150 metre wide gorge, is located in the township of Dorion, about 65 kilometres northeast of Thunder Bay. From the lookout platforms on the canyon rim, the land beneath your feet falls 100 metres straight down to the canyon floor. Arctic plants, generally found 1000 kilometres to the north, survive in the cool, moist habitat of the canyon.

### Superior By Any Standards

Ouimet Canyon is a gorge, cut into the rock of Lake Superior's northern shore. Ice, wind and rain, the architects of time, have chiselled deep into the Canadian Shield to form one of the most striking canyons of Eastern Canada.



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### For Further Information

To find out more about what this Nature Reserve has to offer, contact:

Sleeping Giant Provincial Park  
R.R.1  
Pass Lake ON P0T 2M0

(807) 977-2526  
Natural Resources Information Centre  
Macdonald Block, Room M1-73  
900 Bay St  
Toronto ON M7A 2C1  
(416) 314-2000

For more information please refer to the Ontario Provincial Parks Guide or call the park.

### Pour de plus amples renseignements

Pour toute information concernant le parc, adressez-vous au :  
Par provincial Sleeping Giant

Pass Lake ON P0T 2M0  
(807) 977-2526

Centre d'information sur les ressources naturelles  
900, rue Bay  
Édifice Macdonald, bureau M1-73  
Toronto ON M7A 2C1  
(416) 314-1665

Pour tout renseignement, consultez le *Guide des parcs provinciaux de l'Ontario* ou appeler le parc.

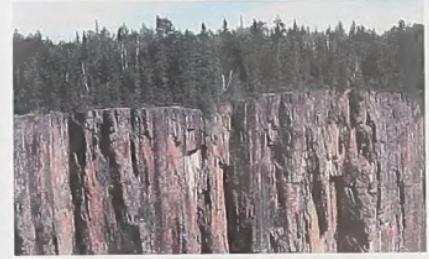


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A wide and gentle one kilometre long walking trail leads from the parking lot to two viewing platforms that extend over the edge of the steep canyon wall.

Across the 150 metre gap, huge columns of diabase rock reach skyward to form a spectacular and gigantic rock wall. To the north, the canyon pinches and twists into the surrounding hills. To the south, its folds open to a broad valley and grand vista of Lake Superior.

Borrowing its name from the nearby and since forgotten Ouimet Station on the Canadian Pacific Railway, the canyon honours Joseph Aldéric Ouimet, Canadian Minister of Public Works from 1892 to 1896. Monsieur Ouimet had also been a highly regarded lieutenant-colonel in charge of the well-respected 65th Mount Royal Rifles. The Regiment worked on the transcontinental railway while enroute to quell the 1885 North West Rebellion.



### Un panorama inoubliable

Gorge spectaculaire de 150 mètres de large, le canyon Ouimet est situé dans le canton de Dorion, à environ 65 kilomètres au nord-est de Thunder Bay. Entre les plates-formes d'observation et le fond du canyon, il y a un gouffre de 100 mètres. Des plantes arctiques, généralement présentes à 1 000 kilomètres au nord, survivent dans l'habitat frais et humide du canyon.

### En un mot, supérieur

Le canyon Ouimet est une gorge taillée dans la roche de la rive nord du lac Supérieur. Au cours des millénaires, les glaces, le vent et les pluies ont creusé cette section du bouclier canadien. Le résultat : un des plus remarquables canyons de l'Est du Canada.

### Ancient Origins

Over a billion years ago, hot molten rock (magma) rose up, from deep within the earth. About a kilometre beneath the earth's surface, the magma flowed horizontally to form a huge pancake shaped rock formation called a sill. As the magma cooled, it became a hard rock called diabase. Gradually the softer rocks above eroded away exposing the flat top of the diabase sill.

About a million years ago, glaciers, high mountains of ice, slowly advanced over the land, crushing and grinding everything in their wake. Large portions of the sill crumbled beneath the weight of the ice. As the climate warmed, the glaciers retreated, exposing the scoured landscape to the chiselling action of the forces of freeze-thaw and running water. It was both gouging and chiselling that deepened and



### Origines anciennes

Il y a plus d'un milliard d'années, la roche liquide des profondeurs de la terre (le magma) est remontée vers la surface. À environ un kilomètre de la surface, cette couche horizontale de magma s'est refroidie pour former une roche dure et compacte que l'on nomme diabase. C'est ainsi que fut façonné le filon-couche, cet énorme rocher plat dont on aperçoit aujourd'hui la surface. Car, au fil des siècles, les matières plus légères qui le recouvrivent à l'origine, ont été érodées.

Le

canyon, comme la station Ouimet du Canadien Pacifique aujourd'hui oubliée, est nommé en l'honneur de Joseph Aldéric Ouimet. Ministre des Travaux publics de 1892 à 1896, cet homme fort respecté avait aussi été lieutenant-colonel du 65<sup>e</sup> régiment des Carabiniers Mont-royal. Son régiment, qui se dirigeait vers l'Ouest pour étouffer la Rébellion de 1885, a participé à la construction du chemin de fer transcontinental.

widened a large joint or crack in the sill to form Ouimet Canyon.

Diabase rock has a distinct pattern of vertical jointing resulting in a column-like appearance to the rock face of Ouimet Canyon. Over the millennia, great blocks of rock have crashed to the canyon floor, widening the gap and covering the floor with shattered boulders measuring as much as ten metres across.

Some of the columns resist breaking and form a rock pinnacle separate from the canyon wall. Such a pinnacle guards the west of the canyon near the second lookout area and is known as the Indian Head.



## Plant Life

The bottom of Ouimet Canyon has a climate greatly different from the surrounding area. Short periods of sunlight, thick insulating moss carpets and cold stagnant air enable ice to remain year round beneath the giant boulders. These cold conditions contribute to Ontario's most southern occurrence of at least three species of Arctic plants. The delicate Arctic Pyrola occurs at several points and two other plants, a moss and a liverwort are also found among the rocks below.

Many other uncommon Arctic and sub-Arctic plants are present, including the alpine Bistort and Sandwort. Collectively, these species comprise communities that are also of provincial significance. In effect, they are relicts, left over from a time when the climate was much cooler due to



## La flore

Le climat au creux du canyon Ouimet est très différent des régions environnantes. En raison des courtes périodes ensOLEillées, d'une épaisse couverte isolante de mousse et de l'air froid stagnant, la glace au pied des rochers ne fond jamais. Grâce à ces conditions froides, le canyon est l'habitat le plus au sud d'au moins trois espèces de plantes arctiques en Ontario. Le délicat pyrola d'Amérique pousse à plusieurs endroits, de même que deux autres espèces, la mousse et le petit-épis.

D'autres plantes arctiques et subarctiques rares y sont aussi présentes, notamment la renouée vivipare et la sabline. Ces espèces d'importance provinciale sont des vestiges d'une époque où le climat était beaucoup plus froid en raison de la proximité des glaciers. Même le saule discolor se

the presence of the nearby glacier. Even the common Pussy Willow, normally an upright shrub, exhibits a peculiar low mat like growth, characteristic of Arctic plants.

The remainder of the park is representative of the boreal forest. Common trees include trembling aspen; white birch, balsam fir, white and black spruce and jack pine.

Due to the extremely fragile nature of the canyon flora, travel to the bottom is restricted.



## Enjoying the Natural Environment

**Hiking** A one kilometre loop trail to two viewing platforms along the canyon's rim. Please stay on the trail and view the canyon only from the designated lookout points.

**Caution: Off trail hiking is dangerous. There are no barriers or signs identifying cliff edges.**

Nature Reserve Parks, such as Ouimet Canyon, protect outstanding features for scientific and educational uses. General public enjoyment is permitted only if the fragile features of the Nature Reserve can tolerate such use.



## Plan Your Visit Now

Ouimet Canyon Provincial Nature Reserve is a must see for anyone travelling the North Shore of Lake Superior along Highway 17. It is located 65 kilometres east of Thunder Bay or 33 kilometres west of the town of Nipigon.

Sleeping Giant Provincial Park, located about 60 km west of Ouimet Canyon, via Highways 17 and 587, offers camping, hiking and swimming facilities. While in Sleeping Giant, plan a day hike to the top of the Giant. There are trails that will take you to the highest cliffs overlooking the largest lake in the world, Lake Superior.



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